

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 2722

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TAGS: IT, PINT, PFOR
SUBJECT: EX-COMMUNIST VIEWS ON PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 13-14

REF MILAN 2637

SUMMARY: TWO WELL-KNOWN EX-COMMUNISTS TOLD US THEY SAW
NOTHING NEW EMERGING FROM PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 13-14. END SUMMARY.

2. FORMER PCI OFFICIALS RENATO MIELI AND GUILIO SENIGA (REFTEL)
TOLD US DECEMBER 16 IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS THAT THIS WEEK'S
PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN ROME CONTAINED NO EVIDENCE
OF REAL CHANGES IN PCI BEHAVIOR. MIELI FELT MEETING WAS PRI-
MARILY ATTEMPT TO REASSURE BOTH RADICALS AND MODERATES WITHIN
PCI MEMBERSHIP. SENIGA SAW IT MAINLY AS ANOTHER BID FOR
INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE. MIELI WAS ONCE IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS FOR PCI (UNTIL 1957) AND IS FORMER MILAN EDITOR OF
UNITA (1946-1948). SENIGA, WHO MADE CLAMOROUS EXIT FROM
PARTY IN 1954, IS NOW SOCIALIST. HE HAS WRITTEN BOOK CRITICAL OF
TOGLIATTI. BOTH SAID THEY WERE COMMENTING ON CENTRAL COMMITTEE
MEETING SOLELY ON BASIS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

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3. BOTH MIELI AND SENIGA FIRM THAT NEITHER SELF-CRITICISM
CONAINED IN GIANNI CERVETTI'S SPEECH BEOFRE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE NOR HIS APPEALS FOR MORE EFFICIENCY AND DEMOCRACY
WITHPARTY ARE ANYTHING NEW. SENIGA SAID THAT MODERATE
DEGREE OF PUBLIC CRITICISM HAS OFTEN BEEN TOLERATED WITHIN
PCI, AND THIS INSTANCE IS CERTAINLY FAR LESS THAN BREAK IN

RANKS. THERE WAS NO MORE OUTSPOKENNESS AT THIS MEETING THAN IN PAST. NOR, SAID SENIGA, WAS ANYTHING SAID THAT WOULD STRIKE THE EAR OF THE INITIATED AS NOVEL. OF COURSE, HE ADDED, WE ONLY HAD HAVE ACCOUNTS OF SPEECHES THAT PCI ITSELF RELEASED.

4. MIELI AGREED THAT MEETING, AT LEAST ACCORDING TO UNITA'S ACCOUNTS, CONTAINED NOTHING NEW. WHAT CERVETTI MEANT BY CALL FOR MORE INTERNAL DEMOCRACY, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS NOT APPEAL FOR REAL OPPOSITION WITHIN PARTY BUT RATHER MORE PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING, WHICH WOULD BE DONE IN LAST ANALYSIS HOWEVER AT TOP, AS ALWAYS.

5. THAT DID NOT MEAN, SAID SENIGA, THAT PCI USE OF PLURALISTIC TERMINOLOGY SHOULD BE DISMISSED AS NOTHING MORE THAN POSTURING. TO HAVE COMMUNISTS SPEAKING LIKE DEMOCRATS WAS ENCOURAGING. BUT IT MUST NOT BE CONFUSED WITH REAL THING.

6. WHAT WAS PRINCIPAL MEANING OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING? FOR SENIGA, PCI WAS UP TO OLD TRICK OF PLAYING AT PLURALISM FOR GALLERY. REAL LINE HAD BEEN LAID DOWN SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE BY BERLINGUER. MEETING NOW SERVED TO ALLOW FIGURES LIKE COSSUTTA AND CERVETTI TO EMPHASIZE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF LINE, GIVING APPEARANCE OF DIFFERENCES THAT IN REALITY CAUSED BERLINGUER NO PAIN AT ALL. MEETING ALSO AFFORDED FURTHER EXPOSURE FOR BERLINGUER'S MAN CERVETTI, ALREADY HOLDER OF MOST POWERFUL POSITION IN PARTY NEXT TO SECRETARY HIMSELF.

7. MIELI AGREED WITH SENIGA BUT WENT DEEPER. PCI APPEARED TO BE TRYING TO HOLD ITSELF TOGETHER BY PORTRAYING ITSELF BOTH AS REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION (COSSUTTA'S JOB) AND AS RESPONSIBLE

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SIBLE PARTY FIT FOR GOVERNING (CERVETTI'S). PARTY NEEDED TO BE UNITED FOR UNHAPPY DAY WHEN IT WOULD HAVE TO SAY YES OR NO TO AUSTERITY MEASURES. MIELI THOUGHT INITIATIVE HAD FIZZLED, PARTLY BECAUSE PARTY ITSELF UNSURE OF ITS DIRECTION. FIRST, IT WAS VERY UNUSUAL FOR PCI EVEN TO ATTEMPT TO PLAN PUBLICLY FOR FUTURE AS BERLINGUER HAD PROPOSED IN RECENT RINASCITA ARTICLE, SINCE PARTY NORMALLY ADAPTED ITSELF TO EVENTS. BERLINGUER'S MEDIUM TERM PLAN IDEA WAS THUS DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL TACTICS, PROBABLY AN ATTEMPT TO GIVE FEELING OF MOMENTUM WITHOUT NECESSITY OF IMMEDIATE ACTION. SECOND, SUGGESTIONS MEANT TO GIVE CONTENT TO MEDIUM TERM PLAN MADE DURING CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING WERE VAGUE, ANOTHER INDICATION OF INDECISIVENESS. FINALLY, NO ONE HAD EVEN LOOKED SERIOUSLY AT ONE OF FEW CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS TO EMERGE, CERVETTI'S CALL FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL. ALL THIS LED MIELI TO DOUBT THAT MEETING HAD BEEN SUCCESS FROM PCI VIEWPOINT.

8. IN SHORT, TWO EX-COMMUNISTS CLAIMED PCI CENTRAL

COMMITTEE MEETING WAS NO MORE THAN EXERCISE OF TACTICS,
AND FAIRLY FAMILIAR TACTICS AT THAT. ALTHOUGH NEITHER
EXCLUDED POSSIBILITY OF REAL CHANGES WITHIN PCI--WHETHER
IN RUNNING OF PARTY ITSELF OR IN PARTY'S SO FAR FAITHFUL
ADHERENCE TO SOVIET LINE IN FOREIGN POLICY--THEY AGREED
THAT THAT DAY NOT HERE YET. FINA

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